

CHRIST *the Foundation of the Believer's Triumph in the View of Death.*

25
A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the
D E A T H
Of the REVEREND
Mr. TIMOTHY SHEPHERD.

Preached at
BRAINTREE, *May 22, 1733.*
FROM
I COR. XV. 55, 56, 57.

By WILLIAM FORD. *K*

L O N D O N:
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To the Reverend

MINISTERS,

Present at the Hearing, and
who desired the Publish-
ing, this SERMON.

Reverend SIRS,

IT was, you know, the earnest
Desire of our late good Friend,
that I should perform the
Service, which now, at your, and
the Request of many others, is
made more publick. I am satisf-

A

fied

ii DEDICATION.

fied he did not desire, nor do I think ~~he would expect~~, that I ~~would say any thing as to his~~ Character, it being contrary to the Custom of his good Father on such Occasions; and yet, I cannot persuade my self to omit the little scanty Account I gave, of what might much more advantageously, and with great Justice, have been enlarged on. We who were invited to attend the Funeral Solemnity (one only excepted) had the Happiness of his Acquaintance, and were Fellow-Students with him, under the Care and Instructions of the same very able Tutors * that he had; and if we

* The Reverend Dr. Thomas Ridgley, and the learned Mr. John James.

have

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have not made the same wise Improvement which he did, of the great Advantages we then had, his Example should be remembered by us, to quicken us to the closer Application now.

Suffer me to take this Occasion to express my great Sense of the kind Providence that has placed my Lot in so agreeable a Neighbourhood; and I take pleasure in telling the World, that whatever lesser Differences there may be in our Sentiments, I believe no Part of the Kingdom can be found, where there is a more hearty Affection between neighbouring Ministers and their Congregations, than in these Parts. Which, that
it

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it may long continue, and increase, and that all our Ministrations, both stated and occasional, may be abundantly blessed of God, to the Conversion of many Sinners, and the Edification of God's People, is, and shall be the earnest Prayer of,



GENTLEMEN,

Your most Obligated,

Humble Servant,

W. FORD.

Heddingham,

June 9,

1733.

(1) vi
~~_____~~
~~_____~~
I Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.

O Death, where is thy Sting? O
Grave, where is thy Victory? The
Sting of Death is Sin, and the
Strength of Sin is the Law; but
Thanks be to God, who giveth us
the Victory, through our Lord Je-
sus Christ.

THESE Words are the Apo-
stle Paul's triumphant Song in
the View of Death. Both
Death and Hades, or the invisible
World, were looked on by him without
any Terror. He knew in whom he had
believed, even in one who was able to
keep what he had committed to him un-
til the great Day; in Jesus who lieth
(though once he was dead) and is alive
B for

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for evermore, and has the Keys of Hell, and of Death : Who had by dying destroyed him that had the Power of Death, i. e. the Devil ; and thus has deliver'd his People, who, through fear of Death, must otherwise have been all their Life-time subject to Bondage. And though it was more common for Christians in the first Ages of Christianity, to attain to a full Assurance of their Interest in the Saviour, and so of their Meetness for eternal Happiness, than in our Day ; yet, blessed be God, even still we find some Instances of Believers, who can say, We know that if our earthy House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God ; an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. Of this Number was our dear deceased Friend, who rejoiced in hope of the Glory of God ; and having good reason, through Grace, to believe that he was become a Child of God, he knew how to conclude, If Children then Heirs, Heirs

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Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ; and it was his own Desire that I would insist on the Words but now read to you, as the Subject of a Funeral Discourse, whenever God should call him to Glory. But alas! methinks the Words in a great measure lose their Accents when pronounced by us, whose Spirits are so low, whose Hearts so out of tune for this sacred Song! The blessed Apostle had been caught up to Heaven, had been favoured with a View of the Glories of the Upper World, had had some Taste of the Blessedness of that State, which Death should be his Entrance into; with what Transports of Joy might he therefore pronounce these Words? Happy they whose Faith is strong and lively, and who can with Spirit join with him herein!

In the Beginning of this Chapter, the sacred Writer gives us the strongest Proof of a Matter of the utmost Importance

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in Christianity ; namely, of the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead. And indeed (as he says) *if Christ be not risen, then is all preaching vain, and our Faith vain* ; but, blessed be God, this is a Matter capable of the most abundant Proof that a reasonable Mind could wish for. Here are Witnesses enough, all of them Men of Integrity and Uprightness, and who surely having had Intimacy with Jesus, before his Death, could not be deceived, and mistake some other for him. Having thus proved that Christ is risen, he infers the Certainty of our Resurrection likewise : As Christ the First-fruits is risen, so shall they that are his, at his coming. But tho' in some respects it shall be the same Body which Believers put off at Death, that they shall then again receive, yet the Alteration in it will be very great and glorious : It is sown in *Corruption*, it is raised in *Incorruption* ; it is sown in *Dishonour*, it shall be raised in *Glory* ; it is sown in *Weakness*, it shall

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shall be raised in *Power* ; it is sown a *natural Body*, it shall be raised a *spiritual Body*. The Bodies of the Saints, when brought to Glory, shall be made like to Christ's own most glorious Body ; for as we have borne the Image of the earthy *Adam*, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly. And even as to those who shall be found alive at the second Coming of our Lord, though they shall not die, yet must they undergo a Change equivalent ; *for this Corruptible must put on Incorruption, and this Mortal must put on Immortality ; and then shall be brought to pass the Saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory* : And so are introduced the Words of the Text, *O Death, where is thy Sting?* &c.

The Margin of our Bible refers us to two Places of Scripture, to one or both of which the Apostle has a Regard ; *Isa. xxv. 8. He will swallow up Death in Victory, and*

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the Lord God will wipe away Tears
from all Faces. Hof. xiii. 14. I will
ransom them from the Power of the
Grave, I will redeem them from Death:
O Death, I will be thy Plagues; O
Grave, I will be thy Destruction. And
I don't see why we may not suppose the
Apostle alludes to both these Passages,

In speaking to the Words, I propose
to insist on these two Observations.

I. That there is something in *Death*
and the *Grave* which cannot but be very
terrible to the human Nature, when con-
sider'd in it self. But,

II. Our Lord Jesus Christ has fur-
nished all that have hope of an Inte-
rest in him, with Ground for Triumph
over both.

I. There is something in *Death* and
the *Grave*, which when consider'd in it
self,

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self, must needs be very terrible to the human Nature.

And here, 1. let us consider Death and the Grave, as they are in themselves natural Evils. 2. The Sting of Death, and the Victory of the Grave. 3. The Strength which this Sting derives from the Law.

(1.) Let us consider Death and the Grave, as they are natural Evils. And I persuade my self, there is scarce any one to whom in this View of them, they appear not at all shocking. “Are we not
“ so apt to love our native Place, where
“ we have tasted so many Delights, passed
“ so many pleasing Hours, conversed
“ so agreeably with this and the other
“ dear Relation, or affectionate Friend;
“ that a Messenger sent to call us away
“ from all, will be likely to prove very
“ unwelcome. To be for ever banished
“ from the Country in which we were
“ born,

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“ born, where we first drew our vital
“ Air, where we learnt all the Accom-
“ plishments which we have attained, can-
“ not but be very disagreeable” Death
separates us from all that is dear to us
in this World: This is very beautifully
expressed by an ingenious Writer * on this
Subject. “ Death, says he, dissolves the
“ nearest and strongest Ties of Nature and
“ Friendship, and hath no Regard to all
“ the Names of Endearment among
“ Men; such as Parents and Children,
“ Brother and Sister, Husband and Wife.
“ It tears us from the Embraces of those
“ that loved us, and whom we loved;
“ takes us away while they stand weep-
“ ing round us.” And as Death dis-
solves all such Relations, so it robs us
of all our worldly Substance, how vast
soever our Stores may have been. This
the wise Man elegantly expresses; *Eccles.*
v. 15. As we came forth out of our Mo-
ther's Womb, naked shall we return to
go as we came, and shall take nothing
of

* Mr. Grove,

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of our Labour, which we may carry away in our hand ; in all Points as we came, so shall we go ; and we shall therefore have no Profit ; for it will appear that we have only laboured for the Wind. This the sacred Penman himself calls a fore Evil under the Sun : And the Psalmist speaking on this Subject, mentions the absolute Impossibility of procuring a Discharge from this Warfare, either by our Riches, or the Affection which any bear to us ; for Death is blind to the Offers of the one, and deaf to the Entreaties of the other. *Psal. xlix. 6, &c. They that trust in their Weakb, and boast themselves in the Multitude of their Riches, none of them can by any means redeem his Brother, (and therefore himself neither) nor give to God a Ransom for him, that he should still live for ever, and not see Corruption.* But besides all this, the Agonies of Death, and the gloomy Darkness and noisom Putrefaction of the Grave, tend to render it exceeding

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ceeding horrid. Who knows how painful the Separation between the Soul and Body? As said our late dear Brother, in his dying Agonies ; *It is one thing to think and speak of dying at a Distance, but another thing to feel the Pains of Death.* And surely the Person must be upon the Wrack, when the Soul and Body, those once near and dear Companions, are to be rent asunder ; when the Agonies of the one forces away the other, no longer able to support them, and the Body becomes a lifeless Carcass : It grows pale and ghastly, it quickly putrifies and becomes loathsome ; and those who used to take the greatest Delight in its Company, forsake it ; in a very few Days it is carried forth from the Place where it used to reside ; is laid in the Ground, becomes a Feast for Worms, is soon forgotten, the Places that once knew it, shall know it no more : It returns to the Dust, from whence it was taken ; and as the Thoughts of the Person deceased do

all perish, so the Thoughts of others concerning it too. Such is Death and the Grave, consider'd as they are natural Evils: And in this View of them Death is alike to all. All find the same Reception in the Grave. There is in this Sense, *one Event to the Righteous, and to the Wicked; as it hapeneth to the Fool, so to Solomon himself.* Eccles. ii. 15, 16. *There is no Remembrance of the wise Man, more than of the Fool for ever; seeing that which now is shall all be forgotten, and how dieth the wise Man? as the Fool.* But tho' Death, in this View of it, is the same to all, yet the Text leads to other Views of it, in which it is far otherwise. Which brings us to consider,

(2.) The Sting of Death, and the Victory which the Grave seems to have over those who are brought to it. And thus are we led to think on Death as a penal Evil, inflicted on Man for his Disobedience. It is that Punishment which

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was threatned in Case of the Breach of God's Law, and to which all Mankind are become obnoxious : For by one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death passed upon all, for that all have sinned : By one Man's Disobedience, many become Sinners ; Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation : And so Death is said to reign even over those who have not sinned, after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression. For they are esteemed Sinners in God's Sight, and the Sin wherewith they are charged, we find *reigneth unto Death*, Rom. v. 12, &c. It was Man's Apostasy from God, that rendered Death and the Grave such victorious Conquerors. They could have had no Power to hurt us, had not Man, by his own fatal Mis-carriage, given it to them. As our Iniquities have separated between us and our God, and we hereby have caused him to hide his Face from us, so we shall find they will separate our Souls from our Bodies

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dies as the Consequence hereof: For when God sets our Iniquities before him, our secret Sins in the Light of his Countenance, then are we consumed by his Anger, and by his Wrath are we troubled, Psal. xc. 7, 8. When he with Rebukes corrects Man for Iniquity, he makes his Beauty to consume away like a Moth, Psal. xxxix. 11. All the Power of Death to hurt is from Sin: Sin wounds the Soul, it pierces it through, and its Sting is poisonous and deadly. And how small, comparatively, are all the Evils mentioned under the last Head to this? Though it must be grievous to the Man who has minded nothing but the World, and earthly Enjoyments, to think of leaving all his dear Delights; yet his Sins staring him in the Face, makes Death much more dreadful. He knows he is going to receive the Wages of his Iniquity. This is indeed the Sting of Death, that it is the Fruit and Effect of Sin. And as the Text mentions the Sting of
Death,

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Death, for the Victory of the Grave:
And how victorious, for a Time, does it
seem to be? Is it not indeed a mighty
Conqueror? All the long-lived Patri-
archs, not excluding *Methuselah* himself,
were at length made Trophies of its Vi-
ctory. *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*,
yea, and *David* too, the Man after
God's own Heart, all yet lie in the
Chambers of Silence, and the Grave, shall
be victorious over them till the Resur-
rection.

(3.) Consider we the Strength which
Sin derives from the Law. The Law
makes it to be Sin. It would not bear that
Name, was it not from its Contrariety to
God's Law, its Opposition to his Will:
The Law is holy, just, and good, but
Sin is a Transgression of the Law, and
so 'tis become offensive to God. *Adam's*
eating of the Tree of Knowledge of
Good and Evil, had been no Crime, had
it not been forbidden Fruit: And then
Sin

Sin takes occasion by the Law, and worketh in us all manner of Concupiscence. The Apostle tells us, *He had not known Sin, but by the Law; for he had not known Lust, if the Law had not said, thou shalt not covet,* Rom. vii. 7, 8. Says One on this Place, the corrupt Nature would not have swelled and raged so much, but because the Law lays Restraints upon it: And since our First Parents eat forbidden Fruit, all their Posterity have been strangely dispos'd to tread in their Steps. The Law is designed to stop the Current of Mens Lust; but so it is, the more they are stopt, sometimes the higher they swell: And so though the Commandment be holy, just, and good, and was ordained to Life, yet many find it to be unto Death; an Occasion of Death unto them. But the principal thing intended here, is, as I conceive, to intimate that the Law contains the Sentence of Death denounced against Sinners, and so is Sin said to have
its

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its Strength from the Law. Sin *therefore* works Death, *because* the Law says, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things contained therein; to do them.* The Word of God reveals to Man his Duty in so clear and convincing a Light, that when we compare our selves with it, and find that we are sadly wanting, the Law stands in full Force against us: And thus has Sin its Strength, thus does it ruin us; for it is contrary to the Rule of Duty, and so according to the Law it self deserves Death: And the Death which the Law of God threatens, is not merely Death temporal, but Death eternal; for *Sin* is an Offence against an infinitely perfect Being, and Crimes always arise higher and higher, in proportion to the Persons, against whom they are committed; and therefore the Word of God tells us, that *the Wicked shall go away into eternal Punishment; the Smoke of their Torment arises for ever and ever.* This is indeed an Evil
most

most of all to be feared, that the Death of the Body should be followed with the Death and Destruction of the Soul and Body, and that according to our Desert, not the first only, but the second Death should be our Portion. The Law may well be said to be the Strength of Sin, since such is its Denunciation; and it tells us no way to escape, if we are Sinners. According to it, no Offence can be pardoned; it makes no Provision of Happiness, but only for those who yield perfect Obedience to it: And O how unspeakably miserable must we have been, if there had been no better Covenant than that of Works! But blessed be God, it is far otherwise. For,

II. Our Lord Jesus Christ has furnished all that have hope of an Interest in him, with Ground for Triumph over Death and the Grave: *Thanks be to*
D *God,*

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God, who giveth us the Victory through
our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. He has made Atonement for Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself: Christ Jesus has satisfied divine Justice; *has made Reconciliation for Iniquity, has finished Transgression, made an End of Sin, and brought in everlasting Righteousness.* He gave himself for us, that he might deliver us from that Destruction to which we stood exposed. This was his great Errand on which he was sent into the World, viz. *to save his People from their Sins: He suffered the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God:* Laid down his Life to ransom our Souls from Death and Hell. We know *the Church of God was purchased with his own Blood:* A sufficient Price has been paid, even as much as God required. *Silver and Gold* indeed would be of no Avail in this Case; and *we are not redeemed*
with

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with *such corruptible Things, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without Blemish, and without Spot.* Our Redeemer was no less a Person than *God manifest in the Flesh*; he, as to his divine Nature, was *One* with the *Father*, *thought it no Robbery to be equal with God*; for *he was the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person*; and therefore what he did and suffered after he had condescended to come *in Fashion as a Man, and in the Form of a Servant, and so was obedient unto Death*, was available to do away all our Transgressions. There was infinite Merit in the Redeemer's Undertaking, and so he frees us from the Curse of the Law, having been made a Curse for us. In this respect, *he has actually and fully abolished Death* to all his People; for he has taken away that which made it deadly and poisonous. The Transgressions of his People are for-

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given ; their Sins are covered, and Iniquity is no longer imputed to them ; for every Believer is righteous, having the Righteousness of the Redeemer imputed to him by God, and so is made *comely*, through *his Comeliness put upon him*.

2. He, as the Head of his Church, bestows Grace and Strength, to mortify and subdue our Corruptions ; Is Death therefore terrible, because of Sin ? Why then, behold, Christian, thy Saviour offering thee Assistance to set thee free from the Bondage thou hast been in to it. The Son maketh us free, and so are we free indeed. The second *Adam* is in this Respect a quickning Spirit, as he is the Author of spiritual Life in every holy Soul : *As is the Vine, so are the Branches* ; and being in him, we derive Sap and kindly Influence enabling us to bring forth Fruit, for *without him we could do nothing*. He, by his Spirit, raises Believers

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lievers to Newness of Life, and thus *are we created anew in Christ Jesus unto good Works*; and the *Seed* that he thus sows in the Heart, is *incorruptible Seed, which lives and abides for ever*. In giving us the Victory over our Corruptions, he in some measure may be said to give us the Victory over Death.

3. Even in Death it self the Christian shall find underneath him an everlasting Arm; the eternal God will then be his Refuge: He must, 'tis true, lie in the Grave, must pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; well, but still he has his God and Saviour with him. The Redeemer will be with the Saint in the Time of his Distress, he will not forsake him; no, when Heart and Flesh are ready to fail him, he will be the Strength of his Heart, and his Portion for ever. He that has Hope of being interested in the Favour of God, through Christ, sees
Death

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Death stripp'd of its most frightful Garb:
To him it appears as a Bed of Rest,
*Iſa. lvii. 2. He ſhall enter into Peace:
They ſhall enter into Reſt, each one walk-
ing in his Righteouſneſs. Rev. xiv. 13.
And I heard a Voice from Heaven, ſay-
ing unto me, write, Bleſſed are the
Dead which die in the Lord, from
henceforth: Yea, ſaith the Spirit, that
they may reſt from their Labours.*

4. The Chriſtian knows the Time is
quickly coming, when to him *Death*
and the *Grave* ſhall be no more. Death
is an Enemy to be ſure to the Chriſtian,
for, for a Season it deprives him of that
full and compleat Happineſs, of which
he is an Heir: The Redeemer therefore
being himſelf riſen again from the Dead,
*having looſed the Pains, or Chains of
Death, becauſe it was impoſſible that he
ſhould be holden of it,* will in due Time
collect the ſcattered Particles of the Duſt
of

of his Saints, and re-unite Soul and Body, and bring them both into his immediate Presence, where there is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasure for evermore. If we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also, that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. The Time is coming, when the Sea shall deliver up the Dead that are in it, and Death and the Grave shall deliver up the Dead that are in them, Rev. xx. 13. Then shall the seeming Victory of Death and the Grave over the Saint, appear with a quite different Aspect. The Victory of the Saint over both will be perfect, and compleat; *Death shall be swallowed up in Victory.* The Soul therefore that has been enabled, thro' Grace, to fly for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before it, that has applied to Jesus according to his Gospel, knowing this, that a few Days more, and he shall utterly foil this supposed Conqueror, in the sure and cer-
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tain

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tain Perswasion of it, may before-hand
cry out, *O Death, where is thy Sting?*
O Grave, where is thy Victory?

Were there Time, I might shew what
is necessary, in order to our being able,
in the View of Death, to join in this
triumphant Song. And,

1. There must be really and truly a
Work of Grace in the Soul. Alas, to
the Sinner, Death has a Sting that wounds
incurably; the Victory of the Grave is
compleat, for the second Death succeeds
the Removal of the guilty Wretch out of
this World: He must for ever lie in the
Place of Guilt. It is only those blessed
and holy Souls, that have been made
Partakers of the first Resurrection from
the Death of Sin to the Life of Righte-
ousness, that shall find themselves Heirs
of the Blessedness of which we have been
speaking. And,

2. The

2. The Spirit must shine upon his own Work, and discover to the Soul that he is one of those that belong to Christ: For, if *the Spirit* does not *bear Witness with our Spirits*, we cannot take the Comfort of our Relation unto him. When any therefore *have the Witness in themselves*, that they have closed with the Lord Jesus Christ by Faith, they may say, without Fear, as in our Text, *O Death, where is thy Sting?* &c.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

1. Is it only thro' Christ Jesus that we can hope to have the Victory over Death and the Grave? how solicitous should we be to be interested in him! All the dreadful Load of Guilt which we have contracted, so heavy and insupportable a Burden, must lie upon us, if we do not belong to Christ: This will

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infallibly, at Death, not only sink us into the Grave, but into Hell. What considering Mind then is there, that would not say, doubtless, *I count all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.*

2. How will the Love of Christ constrain the real Christian to live to him, who has bought Victory over all his Enemies for him at so dear a Rate? Behold here, Christian, and be amazed at the Love of Jesus, which passes Knowledge! Tho' he was rich, infinitely so, being no less than God equal with the Father, yet for our Sake he became poor, that we thro' his Poverty might become rich. The Lord of Life and Glory was crucified, and so entred into the Regions of Death and Darknes, to take away the Sting of Death, and to give us a Conquest over the Grave. But what cost

cost him so much, comes to us most freely: We are justified freely by the Grace of God, through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus. I verily perswade my self, that whatever some may say, with respect to the Doctrines which exalt the free Grace of God the most, and ascribe all the Glory of our Salvation to the Redeemer, as if they had a Tendency to Licentiousness, yet will the Apostle's Account of the Matter be found most true: *The Love of Christ will constrain all his real Disciples, because they thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died, that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who loved them, and gave himself for them.*

3. How should this Thought, that Christ Jesus will certainly give his People the Victory over Death and the Grave, removing the Sting, and making them

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Conquerors, reconcile them to the Thoughts of Dying? This was what supported our dear deceased Friend, in the View of his approaching Dissolution. He had many excellent Qualifications, which tended to render him a very agreeable Friend and Companion. Before his long Illness had so seized his Spirits, he was a Person of much innocent Cheerfulness and Pleasantry, which rendered his Conversation very engaging. Besides a quick and lively Genius, which capacitated him for the more easy attaining the Knowledge of those Things which he searched into, his Application and Industry was very considerable. But what crowned all, was the Seriousness of his Spirit, and his Regard to the best Things. His Faith and Trust in God, his Patience under the long Afflictions which God saw fit to lay upon him, and his Resignation to the divine Will, render him worthy our Imitation. When
he

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he was in a Capacity of appearing in the Pulpit, he shewed Preaching was his delightful Work, and that he was in earnest when he recommended Religion to the Regard of his Hearers: And, I verily hope and believe, from the general Acceptance he met with where he labour'd, that there shall be found some at the great Day, who shall be his Joy and Crown of rejoicing.

I don't know how to omit mentioning his Charity and Candour towards those who were in a different way of thinking from himself, in lesser Matters: A Disposition too rarely to be met with, I am afraid, in those of us who are younger Ministers, and have not yet attained those Measures of Knowledge, which, in Time, perhaps, we may arrive at. I should be sorry if any should think he was indifferent as to the great and more important Doctrines of
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the Gospel ; for, I perswade my self, he,
upon all Occasions, was ready to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints: But yet he knew *the Truth might be spoken in Love*, Eph. iv. 15. And he had learn'd to speak it *without Bitterness, Wrath, Clamour, and Evil-speaking*. But, what is especially to be taken notice of in him, is this, that he had no thought of finding Acceptance with God for any Thing that there was in himself, but only as he hoped he was interested in Christ Jesus. His Regards to God's Will, tho' the Evidence of his being a Child of God, yet was not the Righteousness by which he hoped to be justified. He knew it was Jesus Christ alone that could disarm Death of its Sting ; and therefore with what Delight might he pronounce the Words of the Text, *I thank God who giveth me the Victory, through Jesus Christ my Lord*. And thus Dying was not terrible in his
Appre-

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Apprehension ; he had a Desire to depart, that he might be with Jesus : And, if we have ground to hope we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, we need not be afraid of all that Death and the Grave can do to us.

4. This Consideration, that the Believer is a Conqueror over Death and the Grave, should tend to still and quiet surviving Friends, at their Removal. I am well assured, that as to the worthy Parents of our dear Brother deceased, their Heart's Desire and Prayer to God, both for him and all the rest of the Children, whom God graciously gave them, always was, that they might be saved. He that has been such a faithful Steward of the Mysteries of God, and so diligently watched for the Souls of all his Hearers, did, I am satisfied, as it were, travel in Birth to see Christ formed in his own Children. And are not his Prayers heard,
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I hope, not for this only, but for the rest likewise? Well, and when God has made a Child of his meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, and has actually called him to take Possession of it, will not this give Relief under so severe a Stroke? I am sure no other Consideration can be equal to it. As to *sorrowing for those who sleep in Jesus, as Persons without Hope*, 'tis most unreasonable: And tho' we may sorrow for our own great Loss, (and I am perswaded all the neighbouring Churches that knew him, and have had the Benefit of his occasional Labours, think the Loss very great) yet the Consideration of his Gain, will, in some measure, alleviate it.

5. It is very lawful for us² to pray, that when we come to die, if it be God's Will, we may have a comfortable View of his reconciled Face through Christ,

that so we may bear our Testimony to him, at our Departure from this World. O happy Souls, who see a Convoy of the heavenly Host standing around their dying Beds, safely to carry the departing Spirit into *Abraham's Bosom*! Lord, if it were thy Will, let this be our Happiness! that so, in the Prospect of Death, we may be able to say, *We know that our Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day on this Earth: And tho' after our Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in our Flesh we shall see God.* Then may we put off the Body, saying, with the Psalmist, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor suffer my Flesh forever to see Corruption; but wilt at length shew me the Path of Life, and bring me into thy Presence, where there is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore.*

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